

the bill (H.R. 4811) making appropriations for foreign operations, export financing, and related programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2001, and for other purposes, which was referred to the Union Calendar and ordered to be printed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 1, rule XXI, all points of order are reserved on the bill.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. WATKINS. Mr. Speaker, I was delayed on the first two votes this evening because of plane delay due to inclement weather in Cincinnati.

If I had been here on the Coburn amendment prohibiting the development or approval of any drug intended solely for the chemical inducement of abortion, I would have voted "yes."

On the Royce amendment, to reduce the total fiscal year 2001 agriculture appropriations by 1 percent, I would have voted "no."

#### CORRECTION TO CONGRESSIONAL RECORD OF JUNE 21, 2000, ROLL-CALL VOTE NUMBER 305

Pursuant to the order of the House of June 26, 2000, the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, of June 21, 2000, was ordered corrected to correctly reflect that Representative ROYBAL-ALLARD did not vote on rollcall number 305 (H.R. 4635/ on agreeing to the Collins of Georgia amendment). The electronic voting system had incorrectly attributed an "aye" vote to Representative ROYBAL-ALLARD.

#### SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

#### MARRIAGE TAX PENALTY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, many of us over the last several years have asked a very basic and fundamental question, and this question is going to be answered again this week, and that is: Is it right, is it fair that under our Tax Code 25 million married working couples pay on average \$1400 more in higher taxes just because they are married?

Is it right, is it fair that two people who joined together in holy matrimony, who both happen to work, are forced to pay higher taxes if they choose to get married? Today, the only way to avoid the marriage tax penalty if both the husband and wife work in the workforce is either choose not to get married or to get divorced. That is just wrong, that 25 million married

working couples, 50 million Americans, pay higher taxes just because they are married. It is wrong, I believe, and I know many in this House do believe that it is wrong, that we punish society's most basic institution, marriage, with higher taxes. That is just unfair.

Let me introduce to my colleagues Shad and Michelle Hallihan, two public school teachers, from Joliet, Illinois. Shad and Michelle chose to get married a couple of years ago. They are both in the workforce. They just had a child this past year, a new baby. They pay the average marriage tax penalty of \$1400. They knew that going into getting married, that they were going to pay more in taxes, but they chose to still get married.

I believe it is wrong. They pay \$1400 more in higher taxes. In Joliet, Illinois, which is a south suburban community southwest of Chicago, \$1400 for Shad and Michelle Hallihan, the average marriage tax penalty, is one year's tuition at Joliet Junior College, our local community college. It is 3 months of day care for their child. It is just wrong they have to pay more in taxes just because they are married.

Now, the marriage tax penalty comes into play when two people marry and they are both in the workforce and have two incomes, because under our Tax Code they file jointly, which means they combine their incomes. So in the case of Shad and Michelle, had they chose to stay single and just live together, they would each file as singles and they would each pay in the 15 percent tax bracket. But because they chose to get married, their combined income pushes them into the 28 percent tax bracket, so they get stuck with a higher tax bill just because they chose to get married.

Now, we believe in this House, and it is clearly one of the top agenda items for House Republicans, that we should bring about some tax fairness by eliminating the marriage tax penalty. I am proud that earlier this year every House Republican, and 48 Democrats who broke with their leadership, voted to wipe out the marriage tax penalty for 25 million married working couples. Unfortunately, Senator DASCHLE and the Senate Democrats used parliamentary procedures to block action on that legislation, and we have now had to go through the budget process, or so-called reconciliation, which is a word few people know the meaning of, but it allows us to bring up a bill with a simple majority vote.

2130

With that ability, this week both the House and Senate are going to be voting on legislation which will wipe out the marriage tax penalty for 25 million married working couples.

Now, some on the other side and AL GORE and a few others say, Well, let's give just a little bit of marriage tax relief so we can say we are for it. AL GORE says we should only give marriage tax relief to those who do not

itemize their taxes, those who use the standard deduction.

Well, we want to help those who do itemize, as well as those who do not itemize. If you think about it, most middle-class families, most middle-class couples, itemize their taxes because they are homeowners. Think about that. If you are a homeowner, those who oppose the bill we are going to be passing this week, because they do not want to help homeowners and they do not want to help those who itemize taxes, because they say they are rich, only rich people own homes today, according to AL GORE and other people.

Well, the bottom line is, the only way we can help Shad and Michelle Hallihan is if we pass the legislation we are going to pass this week, legislation that doubles the standard deduction for joint filers to twice that of singles, so we wipe out the marriage tax penalty for those who do not itemize, and then for those who do itemize, such as homeowners, or those who take the charitable deduction because they give to their institutions of faith or charity, we also widen the 15 percent bracket to twice that for joint filers to twice that of singles. That will eliminate essentially the marriage tax penalty for Shad and Michelle Hallihan.

Think about it. If we eliminate the marriage tax penalty, which we are going to vote this week to do, for 25 million married working couples, 50 million Americans, people like Shad and Michelle will have that extra \$1,400 to take care of their child. That is 3 months of daycare. It is a year's tuition at Joliet Junior College if they want to continue to improve their education.

I want to extend an invitation to my friends on the Democratic side to join with us. Let us eliminate the marriage tax penalty this week.

#### AGRICULTURAL APPROPRIATIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TANCREDO). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. MINGE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MINGE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to discuss for a few moments the legislation which we have been debating today and will take up again tomorrow in the U.S. House of Representatives. This is the agricultural appropriations bill.

I think many of us have rejoiced in the robust economy we have had here in the United States, but the sad fact is that farmers in America are not sharing in this robust economy. Instead, they are facing unprecedented low prices if you adjust for inflation. They are also looking at higher interest costs and increased fuel costs. This is a toxic cocktail that is going to take its toll on America's farmers as the year wears out.

So as we look at the agricultural appropriations bill, the question is, are

we treating the farm sector of our economy fairly? I think in this regard it is important to first note that the appropriations subcommittee is constrained by the budget.

I happen to serve on the Committee on the Budget. I was very disappointed with the unfair treatment that America's farmers received from the Republican budget. I was constrained to vote against it, and I hope that as this appropriations bill moves to the Senate and comes back for consideration, that we can rectify some of its shortcomings. I would just like to point out a few.

First, and perhaps most importantly, we have failed to target the billions of dollars of agricultural assistance that is being spent in the U.S. Treasury. Instead, this money is going out the back-door, billions and billions these months; and it is going largely for the benefit of land ownership. It is not being targeted to assist those operating farmers who, indeed, are suffering from low prices.

Mr. Speaker, we are not targeting this money. We ought to be targeting the money. We ought to have programs that focus on the safety net concept, dealing with prices that farmers are receiving, not simply spending billions willy-nilly. We ought to have programs that recognize effective caps, but instead we have some that are receiving hundreds and hundreds of thousands of dollars and others scarcely enough to enable them to stay in their farming occupation.

A second problem is that the farm programs are largely administered by the Farm Service Agency. That agency, unfortunately, has many new programs thrust upon it, complicated changes in the programs it administers; and it has an inadequate staff. This is a dangerous recipe for disappointment, frustration and resignation ultimately by key employees. We ought to be providing the Farm Service Agency with the resources it needs, the staff that it needs to carry out its mission.

Third, the farm programs are also implemented, especially in the conservation area, by the Natural Resources and Conservation Service. The service itself is not adequately compensated. Furthermore, the conservation programs themselves are shortchanged.

Fourth, we have a dramatic limit on agricultural research, dramatically less than requested by the President.

Fifth, we have a dramatic limit on rural development, and, again, dramatically less than requested by the President.

Sixth, we have inadequate funding for the Packers and Stockyards Administration, or GIPSA. This is the agency in the Department of Agriculture that is charged with making sure that in the livestock sector we do not have unfair trade practices that undermine the farmer's ability to receive a fair price for the livestock that he or she is mar-

keting. It is absolutely necessary that if we are going to fulfill the mission of the Packers and Stockyards Act, that GIPSA be adequately financed. It is shortchanged.

Similarly, the Office of General Counsel within the Secretary's office is shortchanged. We cannot expect these agencies of the Federal Government to perform their mission if they do not have an adequate staff of attorneys and economists.

Finally, the promise of trade has been held out to America's farmers as really the hope that they have for improved prices. But trade cannot be the cornerstone of our agricultural policy. It has to be one part.

We have talked about trade with Cuba today. Unfortunately, trade with Cuba is an illusion. It is not in the agriculture appropriations bill, and I fear it will not be when it comes back.

To be sure, we need to do the very best we can in this appropriations bill, but we have got to do more.

#### MISSILE DEFENSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. WELDON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WELDON. Mr. Speaker, this past weekend we had one in a series of tests of our national missile defense program, which is currently under development, and supported both by the White House and by overwhelming support in both the House and the Senate. Unfortunately, this test was not a success, and there are those who are using this test to criticize the overall program and to say that technologically we are not prepared to move forward with missile defense.

I want to take a few moments to clarify what did happen and to clarify for the record what occurred in that test, and am offering to Members this week to have a full briefing, both classified and unclassified, on the details of the test that occurred this past weekend.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, the hit-to-kill technology that is fundamental to missile defense was not tested. It was not tested because we could not get the separation stage away from the main rocket.

Now, that is not new technology. That is not missile defense technology. In fact, Wernher von Braun and other scientists solved this problem 40 years ago. It is a technology necessary to launch every communications satellite into outer space. It is a technology utilized for every space mission that we get involved with. It is not a technology specific to missile defense. However, it failed. No one expected it to fail, just as when we launch communications satellites, we do not expect the separation technology to fail to allow that communications satellite to be put into an orbit.

Unfortunately, there are those who are misinformed; and there are those

who are informed but want to mischaracterize what occurred as to say that this test was an indication that we are not ready to move forward with missile defense. Nothing could be further from the truth.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, I have come out and strongly criticized the corporation who was responsible for the separation stage technology and have put them on notice that if we do not solve this quality-control issue, there will be legislation to punitively punish them for other failures that may occur in the future.

But make no mistake about it, this test was not a failure of missile defense capability. We never got to that stage. The kill vehicle never had the opportunity to go after the target. It never had the opportunity to employ the sensors that are needed in missile defense to kill the incoming missile on its way into an American city.

We will do a full analysis and the Ballistic Missile Defense Organization and the Department of Defense will provide the full reports to us. But this week I will arrange, as the chairman of the Committee on Armed Services Subcommittee on Research and Development, for any colleague in this Chamber that wants, a full briefing on the test, exactly what occurred and why the test failed.

But, again, I would repeat, it was not a failure of missile defense, any more than a rocket trying to launch a satellite into space and failing would cause us to stop all future communication satellite launches. It is simply a problem that we need to get corrected, and we will get corrected.

As Jack Gantzler, our Deputy Secretary of Defense, and General Kadish, our three-star general in charge of missile defense, stated in Congressional hearings 2 and 3 weeks ago, they are totally confident in our technology; and we will move forward. But there are those who want to distort the facts. The Union of Unconcerned Scientists is one of them. Those members of the Flat Earth Society that would like to mischaracterize what occurred are not going to be allowed to get away with that, and I would encourage our colleagues to make sure they avail themselves of all the factual information surrounding that test.

#### NUCLEAR ENERGY CRISIS LOOMING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STRICKLAND) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, we all know what happens when we are too reliant on foreign sources for oil; and, as a result, in my district in southern Ohio and across this country, consumers are paying outrageous prices for a gallon of gasoline.

But there is another energy crisis looming that many of us seem not to be aware of. I think it is important for